

**TOWN OF WOODSTOCK  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
APRIL 05, 2016 7:00 P.M.  
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

**The Board of Finance of the Town of Woodstock will hold a Public Hearing at the Woodstock Town Hall on Tuesday, April 05, 2016 at 7:00p.m. In accordance with section 7-344 of the Connecticut General Statutes.**

**Itemized estimates of the expenditures of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education will be presented and the Board of Finance will hear all persons who wish to be heard in regard to any appropriations which they are desirous that the Board of Finance shall recommend or reject for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.**

**Dated at Woodstock, CT. This 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2016.**

**David A Hosmer, Chairman  
Woodstock Board of Finance**

All members and alternate members of the Board of Finance were present, as well as approximately 75 people, including Mrs. Morin's Boy Scout Troop.

Moderator Ed Higgins called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00pm.

Superintendent Viktor Toth asked Spencer Collins to lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

After the Pledge of Allegiance Mr. Toth went over the Board of Education budget. Areas of significant increases were in hiring a Math Interventionist for the Elementary School, a District Wide Curriculum Coordinator, four part-time teacher assistants, and professional development for the next generation Science Standard. Other increases are in Woodstock Academy tuition, salaries, software, materials and text books, benefits and legal services due to union negotiations. The Special Education budget has increased by \$267,000.

Decreases in the budget are due to heat and electricity costs and health insurance. Four teachers and two administrators will be taking the early retirement incentive. One teacher will not be replaced, and the other positions will be filled with staff hired at a lower pay step.

Mr. Toth explained that the budget still included the school district running the bus schedule. However, the Board of Education has authorized Mr. Toth to enter into negotiations with Dattco Transportation.

After his presentation Erin Quinney asked what the projected enrollment for next year at the Woodstock Public Schools was. Mr. Toth answered that there was currently 430 students enrolled in the Elementary School, and next year it was predicted that there would be 419. At the Woodstock Middle School there were 431 students enrolled with approximately 409 expected next year.

Steven Smock asked Mr. Toth about funding the benefit account. Mr. Toth explained that there was at the moment \$260,000 in the account, but the auditors suggested that there should be \$560,000 in this account to help pay for claims that came in during the summer. He informed the audience that the Board of Finance was currently working on a policy about this Internal Service Account.

Being no further questions on the Board of Education budget Moderator Higgins turned the floor over to First Selectman Allan Walker.

Mr. Walker explained that this year's General Government budget was \$5,386,000. This is an increase of \$56,000 from last year. The redemption of debt for this coming fiscal year is \$456,763 leaving an operating budget of \$4,985,525.

Some of the increases in this year's budget are in wages, both budgets reflect an additional pay week, revaluation, insurances, the Woodstock Emergency Medical Services, the Transfer Station, Recreation and the libraries.

The Board of Selectmen has found cost savings in joining CIRMA for savings in different insurances such as workers compensation and auto and liability insurances. The Town also utilizes NECOGG to save money on animal control services, transit service for the elderly and the handicapped, reevaluation, engineering, GIS, and the paramedic intercept services.

At the Highway Garage savings have been found by utilizing a wood burning furnace, washing the equipment to prolong its life, sharing equipment with Eastford and Union, and crushing gravel.

Mr. Walker announced that there will be a solar array installed at the capped landfill. This will provide electricity to the Transfer Station, the Woodstock Public Schools, the Town Hall, the Highway Garage, and the Water Pollution Control's pumping station.

Next Mr. Walker reviewed the 5-Year Capital Plan. Some of the projects in the 5-Year Capital Plan are for roads, bridges and equipment purchases. The 5-Year Capital Plan is required by the State of Connecticut. If and when the Town of Woodstock decides to do any of these projects the Town can then apply for State grants to help with these projects.

Suzanne Woodward asked why the Recreation budget increased. Mr. Walker explained that it was to resurface the tennis courts located near the Woodstock Middle School.

Mr. Giamundo asked what was done with last year's \$196,000 "surplus". Mr. Walker explained that \$50,000 went into the Contingency Fund, and the rest went into the Capitol and Non-recurring account for road projects.

Mr. Giamundo also had questions about the solar array. Mr. Walker explained that the Town has a 20 year agreement with Be Free Solar. At the end of the 20 years the Town can renew the agreement, purchase the panels, or have the panels taken away.

Chairman David Hosmer went over the estimated revenues. Taxes collected are estimated at \$15,853,000. State grants are estimated at \$5 million, and the other income that will be generated from sources such as fees and permits will be approximately \$403,000.00.

Mr. Hosmer went over the Prop 46 allowable. The Grand List has increased by \$112,561 and Special Education has increased by \$267,000. This allows for an increase in the budget of 380,261.

Currently the Board of Education will be allocated \$224,000 bringing that budget to \$16,852,004. The General Government budget will be allowed to increase by \$56,000 bringing that budget to \$5,442,288. The total combined budget will be \$22,394,553.

At this point the moderator asked the audience if there were any questions or comments.

Michelle Woz, a member of the Board of Education and the chair of the Academic subcommittee stated that the Board and the subcommittee worked very hard to identify where the students were lagging behind. The Board also feels that they have a responsibility to maintain the school facilities and honor benefit agreements. It is a difficult balancing act. She urged the Board of Finance to fund the entirety of the Special Education increase, at a minimum.

Mr. Giamundo feels that since there was a surplus in both budgets at the end of last fiscal year, that there is no need to increase either budgets. Suzanne Woodward disagreed. She stated that programs have been cut over the years and that it is important to reinstate these programs.

Megan Bard-Morse, a member of the Board of Education, asked Board of Finance member David Fortin how he arrived at the figure to be cut the budget at the last Board of Finance meeting.

David Fortin explained that traditionally the budget has been a 75%/25% division. He decided that an 80%/20% division would give the Board of Education a little bit more in the equation. He wanted to leave some head room in the Prop 46 increase in case the State decided to cut grants to the Town.

Chairman David Hosmer explained to David Fortin that the approved budget was the budget and that if the State cut grants the money that was voted for in the budget would

need to be provided. The Board of Education would then have to move funds from one line item to another to meet their obligations. The Board of Selectmen would have to ask for permission to use money from the reserve fund to cover the General Government's obligations. He informed the audience that the contingency fund has a limit of \$50,000 and that this is usually used towards capital projects.

It was the consensus of the people present to fund the budget at the Prop 46 limit, and let the voters decide if it was too high at that level.

David Hosmer announced that the next Board of Finance meeting will be held on April 12, instead of April 19. This will allow both the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen to adjust their budgets and get their figures in order for the legal notice for the Annual Town Meeting to be published in a timely fashion.

Democratic Registrar of Voters Suzanne Woodward announced that the budget referendum would be held on May 17.

Being no further questions or comments Michael Dougherty, seconded by David Fortin, made a motion to adjourn at 8:10pm. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine French  
Clerk